

June 17,2013

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Barbara Rush and I am a retired teacher of 30 years from the Helena School District. I taught special education contained classrooms as well as Resource pullout programs and third, fourth and fifth grade regular classrooms over my thirty years. I am very concerned about Common Core and what it will do to local school districts and their teachers and students.

The federal government has been trying to take over education since I began teaching in Helena in 1975. This centralized control over education takes away the freedom and control that leads to good education. Under local control if a program is not working teachers and parents become aware of this and can make the changes they need to have successful outcomes. Central control takes away competition among programs and leaves schools without the choice to make changes where they see it is necessary. Common Core is a program that seeks to change values and attitudes under the guise of critical and higher level thinking. The developers of these programs are not shy about their intent to have open ended test questions that have more than one right answer. They do not want to teach children facts, they want to teach them what they believe is the right way to think. As Yong Zhao, presidential chair and associate dean of global education at the University of Oregon points out, "Almost all totalitarian governments and dictators claim that they have the responsibility to engineer a society so their people can live happily and that their people are not capable of knowing what is good for them and top level design is necessary". Montana should not have central control over their education and, in fact, this centralized education was mandated in Montana (as in almost all the states that accepted it) illegally by an appointed board.

The Montana State Board of education has been given the authority to regulate K-12 education in Montana under our state constitution. They have not been given the authority to mandate programs and curriculums. That being said, their mandate was implemented illegally. Under Montana Annotated Code section 20-7-101 the Montana State School Board can only enact mandates that cost money after an intervening legislature. The state board mandated this curriculum, which is expected to cost our schools between 40 and 70 MILLION dollars according to the Pioneer Institute financial analysis, without an intervening legislature in November of 2011. In addition, under Montana Annotated Code 2-3-201, the state board is required to hold public meetings that are publicly noticed. There were no public meetings held, only meetings for educators, and they were not publicly noticed. When our legislature convened in 2013 the legislators did not even know what Common Core was. One school district curriculum director told me that even the notice to the educators of the professional meetings was not very good. In addition to these violations, the board was required to do a fiscal analysis. They did not complete the fiscal analysis until January of 2012 lor

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November of 2011. The fiscal analysis reports cash strapped school districts saying they do not have the money to implement Common Core.

We are a nation of laws. The legislature makes laws to protect the public. The public should expect that when our public institutions violate the law as it is written that they will be held accountable. This committee needs to see to it that the Montana State School Board follows the law. Their mandate of Common Core in Montana Should be stopped. Thank you for your time.

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